

Letter to Community Organizations

In the first year of our new beginning, we have shown that we can have a strong and positive impact in the admittedly long struggle for national gay civil rights legislation. But the first year has also reinforced our feeling that, to be most effective at Congress, we must elicit the help and cooperation of groups across the nation who share our commitment to lesbian and gay civil rights.

The dawning of the 1980s sees us facing difficult odds at the federal level. "Christian Voice" and the "Moral Majority" each have well over a million dollars to press their homophobic views on Congress. They are determined to not only stop us from national legislation, but to turn back the clock on our progress.

But we are convinced that, if we put the full strength of our community, we can prevail. It has been heartening to see the positive response of local organizations when we have asked for help. Although they almost inevitably have a busy local agenda, they have understood that we rise or fall together. Now it is critical that the Gay Rights National Lobby expand the network of groups that we are working with. Here's how your organization can plug into the national effort for lesbian/gay civil rights legislation:

(1) Help GRNL Develop Constituent Support

The anti-gay right wing can generate thousands of letters to Congress against our rights, thereby giving a distorted view of how the public feels on the issue. The secret of their ability to generate these letters is that they have the names, addresses and phone numbers of those that oppose our rights.

We simply must develop a similar network capable of generating thousands of letters to Congress at the critical times and thereby demonstrate to elected officials that the majority of Americans support civil rights for lesbians and gay men.

(A) Circulate Petitions

- o Set up petition tables in the bars, coffeehouses and community centers in your area.
- o Circulate petitions at community meetings.
- o Take copies of petitions to non-gay groups that have been supportive in the past i.e. feminist groups, justice-oriented churches, etc.

The names on the petitions (which should, of course, be returned to GRNL) will be added to our Constituent Network so we can keep them informed of Congressional developments and send Congressional Action Alerts as necessary.

Letter to Community Organizations

(1) (B) Share Your Organization's List with GRNL

What better list to include in the national Constituent Network than that of those persons who have already demonstrated their commitment to the issue? If you are unable to just turn over your list to us, would you ask your membership if they would be willing to have their names added to the national Constituent Network?

Some groups that are helping us have sent letters explaining the purpose of the Network and a reply card that allowed the member to indicate that they did not wish to be on the network, such as the card below.

☐ I do not want my name added to GRNL's Constituent Network.

Name

Address

City State Zip

(C) Help GRNL Identify Organizers in Each Congressional District

Although GRNL wants to continue to maintain close contact with local organizations, we are aware that there are many important local priorities and that it would be unfair to ask you, as an organization, to act as on-going organizers for the national bill as well.

If you could initially help us identify two organizers (a woman and a man), they could act as on-going contacts with GRNL and can maintain close contact on the local level.

The organizers, known in our system as C-RATs or the Civil Rights Action Team, would coordinate efforts to add more people to the Constituent Network and would assist in phone follow-up after a "Congressional Action Alert" has gone out urging letters to Congress.

(next page, please)



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(2) Set Up a Meeting with Your Congressperson and Senators in the District

Virtually everyone agrees that one of the most effective ways of gaining the support of your Congressperson and Senators is to meet with them (or their staff) in the district office. Don't judge the possibilities of gaining their support by their past action because a lack of information and a sense that no one in their district/state cared about the issue has had a negative impact on some. You can turn those that have opposed around and provide critical re-inforcement for those that have already been supportive.

- o Urge their support/co-sponsorship of H.R. 2074 (House) and S. 2081 (Senate), the lesbian and gay civil rights bills. (See enclosed fact sheet for info on the bills)
- o Urge their opposition to H.C.R. 166 (House) and S. 1808 (Senate), which would deny us our rights and legalize our discrimination. (See enclosed fact sheet for info on the bills)
- o Urge support for S. 2210 (Senate) and H.R. 6303 (House), legislation designed to repeal the offensive language in immigration and naturalization laws which is used to arbitrarily discriminate based on sexual orientation.
- o Urge their opposition to possible anti-gay amendments which may be offered to otherwise unrelated bills. As you may remember, Congressman McDonald amended a Legal Services bill a couple of years ago to exclude gay related cases. Such an amendment could come up at just about any time and to just about any bill. Informed sources predict such an amendment this spring, although no one yet can predict what bill it will be attached to.

(3) Help GRNL Identify Community, Religious and Political Leaders in Your Area that Support Gay Civil Rights

The support of local opinion leaders can be critical to gaining the active support of Congresspeople and Senators. We are certain that the many fine lesbian and gay organizations around the country have in many cases already gained the support of these individuals (or organizations). But without the precise knowledge of their names, etc. our ability to effectively lobby the Congressperson/Senators. Use the enclosed form to identify local community leaders who support civil rights for gay people.

(4) Join the Gay Rights National Lobby

A recent book on public interest lobbying best states the case:

"Public interest organizations act as intermediaries between their constituents and government officials. How effectively they are able to communicate on behalf of their members is determined, in part, by the amount of resources they are able to utilize."

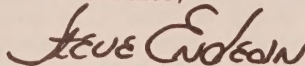
We hope to hire additional staff to work on this immense effort as funding becomes available. Maintaining contact with organizations all over the nation, which we are committed to do, costs a great deal. Our progress is only limited by the resources available to us.

Organizational membership is only \$25.00. Enclosed is a postage free envelope for your convenience.

The decade ahead will be a difficult one. But we are convinced that, together, we can work for a time when gay people will be judged as individuals and not be outmoded stereotypes. Together, we can work for a time when it is ability and not one's personal life to is the key factor in employment. Together, we can work for a time when it is discrimination that is understood to be immoral.

Together, we can work for a better tomorrow.

For Justice,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Steve Endean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Steve" and "Endean" being capitalized and prominent.

Steve Endean
Executive Director
Gay Rights National Lobby

SRE:rd
Enclosures

Gay Rights National Lobby

1696 17th Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20009

(202) 462-4255

LOBBYING: BASIC TECHNIQUES

As a constituent lobbyist, you are a key element in passage of national legislation for lesbians and gay men. By your physical presence, you are testifying to the importance of lesbian and gay issues. Together, we make visible our racial and ethnic diversity. Individually, you can discuss issues, change attitudes, and help secure the support of your elected representatives.

There are a few basic lobbying techniques used by every effective lobbyist.

First, approach your Senator or Congressperson with a positive attitude. Be informative. Explain why the bill is important to you. Accept his/her questions as genuine and try to answer them. Dress neatly so he/she can best relate to you and your views. A positive approach elicits a positive response. Hostility or confrontation can lock the representative into a position against you.

Second, Explain right away what you want. Your representative's time is limited and valuable. Get right to the point. Discuss your main issue first (H.R. 2074 or S. 2081). Be clear from the outset that what you want is his/her support for the bill (and their co-sponsorship). Bring up secondary issues after the first issue has been concluded.

Third, lead your representative to a clearly stated commitment to vote for the bill. Your Senator or Congressperson will want to appear supportive of your issues, no matter how he/she is planning to vote. Words like, "Everybody deserves equal rights", "Discrimination is wrong", or "I'll keep your feelings in mind when the issue comes to the floor" are vague and noncommittal. Press gently for increased commitment: "Will you vote for this bill?", "Do you feel you are able to support this legislation?" or "Will you co-sponsor this basic civil rights legislation?" But be prepared to accept noncommittal answers rather than alienate.

The Thank You Letter. Any time you personally visit a Senator or Congressperson (or their staff person), you increase his/her awareness about the issues. But the effectiveness of your visit increases with the amount of follow-up you do. Send letters to your Senators and Representatives thanking them for their time. Remind them of the most positive statements they made to you, and leave the door open for further communication.

If you received less than a clear commitment during your visit, use your thank you letter to press further for that commitment. Ask questions which require a clear response (so they cannot reply with a form letter). When you receive a written response to such questions, please send a copy of the response to Gay Rights National Lobby.

H.R. 2074 and S. 2081: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Presented here are a few of the most common questions raised by Senators and Congresspeople. The answers are among those found to be most effective in responding to their concerns:

- Q: Is there a real need for this bill? I haven't heard of many actual cases of discrimination.
- A: Most people don't hear about the discrimination that does occur. Studies show that discrimination and harassment is substantial and affects the daily lives of many lesbians and gay men (Give examples of discrimination, especially ones in the district/state)
- Q: Why can't homosexuals keep their private lives to themselves, so there wouldn't be any discrimination.
- A: Lesbians and gay men can't always hide, even if they want to. People have lost their jobs based on rumor and hearsay.
- Q: Wouldn't this legislation condone homosexuality?
- A: No. Civil rights legislation does not pass judgement for or against any race, any religion or any sexual orientation. Those that disapprove of lesbianism or gayness may continue to do so; they just can't discriminate against them.
- Q: Won't gay teachers serve as role models?
- A: There is no evidence to show that the presence of gay teachers causes their students to be gay or lesbian. Many gay teachers are already in the classrooms at present. The National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers and the American Psychiatric Association have all taken positions in support of civil rights for gay teachers.
- Q: Won't this legislation endanger the nuclear family?
- A: The family structure is not so weak that guaranteeing basic civil rights to any group will undermine it.
- Q: Isn't homosexuality anti-religious?
- A: Whether or not homosexuality is a sin, human rights have always been an important religious value. Many major religious groups support civil rights legislation for lesbians and gay men, including the National Council of Churches and the National Federation of Priests' Councils.

IF THERE ARE QUESTIONS YOU CAN'T ANSWER, tell your Senator or Congressperson that you will communicate their question to the Gay Rights National Lobby. GRNL will get back to them with the correct information. Be sure to write the question on the Constituent Visit Report Form

H.R. 2074: THE LESBIAN/GAY CIVIL RIGHTS BILL IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H.R. 2074 is the lesbian/gay civil rights bill in the House. If passed, it will add "affectional or sexual orientation" to existing civil rights laws. It would then be illegal to discriminate against lesbians or gay men in employment, housing, public services or federally assisted opportunities.

In Congress, H.R. 2074 is authored by Congresspersons Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Henry Waxman (D-CA). Currently, the bill is co-sponsored by 52 Congresspersons.

S. 2081: FAIR EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION IN THE U.S. SENATE

S. 2081 is the fair employment bill in the Senate. If passed, it will add the term "sexual orientation" to existing civil rights laws. It would then be illegal to discriminate against lesbians or gay men in employment. Like H.R. 2074 in the House, S.2081 would not require affirmative action in the form of quotas.

Senator Paul Tsongas (D-MA) introduced the bill in late 1979. The bill is currently co-sponsored by Senators Lowell Weicker (R-CN) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY).

H.C.R. 166: THE McDONALD RESOLUTION

House Concurrent Resolution 166, introduced by Congressperson Larry McDonald (D-Georgia), would, if passed, resolve that (in part):

"It is the sense of the Congress of the United States that homosexual acts and the class of individuals who advocate such conduct shall never receive special consideration or protected status under law."

In other words, they would never give us the basic rights taken for granted by others in our society. This resolution, in its entirety, is inflammatory, moralistic and repressive. At this time, it seems unlikely that the resolution will be heard in Committee and therefore will probably not come to the floor for a vote. But you should bring the resolution to your Congressperson's attention and ask a clear commitment to oppose it.

S. 1808: THE FAMILY PROTECTION ACT (LAXALT)

S. 1808, introduced by Senator Paul Laxalt (R-Nevada), is based on the idea that basic justice for lesbians and gay men somehow threatens the family. The bill is omnibus in nature and takes on many issues besides gays. But three sections (or concepts, as Laxalt calls them) deal most specifically with our issues:

- Concept 36: This prohibits legal services funds for homosexual rights litigation.
- Concept 37: This section forbids allocation of federal funds under any authority from being awarded to any organization, group or other entity which advocates homosexuality, or presents homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.
- Concept 38: This provision would write into law a statement that discrimination against declared homosexuals would never be considered an "unlawful employment practice".

LOBBYING H.R.2074 and S. 2081

H.R. 2074 and S.2081 (depending whether your visit is with a House or Senate person) should be the first bill you discuss.

- 1) Ask your Congressperson or Senator if she/he supports H.R. 2074 or S. 2081.
If she/he is unfamiliar with the bill, summarize it and explain its importance.
- 2) If the answer is YES, I WILL SUPPORT H.R. 2074 (or S. 2081)
 - a) Ask if he/she will co-sponsor the bill.
 - b) Ask if he/she would issue a public statement supporting the bill.

If the answer is UNDECIDED or NONCOMMITTAL,
Talk briefly about the bill. Discuss the effects of employment, etc. discrimination. Try to frame it in the context of other civil rights legislation. Mention any local support for the issue. Try to answer their concerns.

If the answer is NO, I OPPOSE H.R. 2074 (or S. 2081)
Ask what her/his concerns are and try to ascertain if she/he might be persuaded to change her/his vote. While it is sometimes tempting to vent our anger, remember that there opposition might be based on misinformation and that we might be just locking them in on a decision that they might otherwise move away from. Try to keep the door open and the dialog continuing.

LOBBYING AGAINST POSSIBLE NEGATIVE AMENDMENTS

Because we are uncertain what bill might be amended or precisely what the amendment would look like for that matter, it is somewhat more difficult to lobby this concern. However, IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU RAISE THE ISSUE.

- 1) Explain that you are aware that there was an anti-gay amendment to the Legal Services bill a couple of years ago (offered by Larry McDonald of Georgia).

Explain that you are informed that there is an increasing tendency in the Congress to offer such amendments on controversial issues to otherwise unrelated bills.

And urge that they, as representatives of ALL the people actively oppose such amendments if they are proposed.

- 2) Attempt to get a flat commitment of opposition to such amendments. If you receive such a commitment, be certain that you:
 - a) Reaffirm that commitment when you send your follow-up thank you letter.
 - b) Let the Gay Rights National Lobby know immediately.

LOBBYING S. 2210 and H.R. 6303 (THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE)

S. 2210 (and H.R. 6303) amends the Immigration and Naturalization Act by striking "sexual deviation" from Section 212 (a)4.

Stress that the language being stricken is medically unjustifiable and outdated. The current law is arbitrary, unfair and unenforceable.

It rewards dishonesty and punishes honesty and openness.

CONSTITUENT VISIT REPORT FORM

REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR _____ DISTRICT# _____

Staff person you met with (if the Senator or Representative was unavailable):

Number of constituents in your group: _____

Date of Meeting _____

THE SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE AGREED TO:

	YES	NO	UNCOMMITTED
Co-sponsor H.R. 2074/S. 2081.....	_____	_____	_____
Support H.R. 2074/S. 2081.....	_____	_____	_____
Oppose any anti-gay amendments.....	_____	_____	_____
Oppose the McDonald Resolution (H.C.R. 166).....	_____	_____	_____
Oppose the "Family Protection Act" (S. 1808).....	_____	_____	_____
Support S. 2210 or H.R. 6303 (Immigration Revision).....	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS: _____

YOUR NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: () _____

ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION (if any):

PLEASE FILL OUT COMPLETELY
AND RETURN TO:

The Gay Rights National Lobby
930 F. St. N.W., Suite 611
Washington, D.C. 20004

YES, We will be a part of the critical struggle for national lesbian and gay civil rights legislation. We understand that we all have a stake in this fight. We all have a stake in making sure that groups such as "Christian Voice" and the "Moral Majority" don't turn back the clock on our progress.

We will help in the following ways:

Developing Constituent Support

____ We will help by circulating petitions.

____ We will share our organization's list.

____ We can't share our organization's list without first giving our members a chance to say "no" for themselves. We will share the names of those allowing us to do so by _____

____ We will help GRNL identify organizers in this (these) Congressional District(s). Please print.

Name _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Congressional District (if known) _____

Name _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Congressional District (if known) _____

Meeting Your Senators and Representative(s)

____ We will meet with our Senators (or their staffs)

____ We will meet with our Representative(s) (or their staffs)

____ We will return the enclosed Report Form (Duplicate for Appropriate Number of Meetings)

Identifying Community, Religious and Political Leaders (Organizations)

____ Enclosed is a current list (with addresses, if possible) of community, religious and political leaders (organizations) that support basic justice for lesbians and gay men

____ We will begin a campaign to gain the support and endorsements of such leaders and organizations

Joining the Gay Rights National Lobby

____ Enclosed is our check or money order for membership in the Lobby.

PETITION OF SUPPORT FOR REVISION OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION LAWS

I support the repeal of offensive and demeaning language in the immigration and naturalization laws which is used to arbitrarily, selectively and unjustly discriminate, on the basis of sexual orientation.

[illegible]

Names will be forwarded to appropriate Members of Congress and will be added to the national Constituent Network so that persons may be kept abreast of Congressional developments.

Please return petition to: Gay Rights National Lobby, 930 F St., N.W., Suite 611, Washington, D.C. 20004

I support the repeal of offensive and demeaning language in the immigration and naturalization laws which is used to arbitrarily, selectively and unjustly discriminate, on the basis of sexual orientation.

Signature

Address, City & State

Telephone

Congressional District
(if known)

[illegible]

Please return petition to: Gay Rights National Lobby, 930 F St., N.W., Suite 611, Washington, D.C. 20004

I support the repeal of offensive and demeaning language in the immigration and naturalization laws which is used to arbitrarily, selectively and unjustly discriminate, on the basis of sexual orientation.

Signature	Name (please print)	Address, City & State	Zip Code	Telephone	Congressional District (if known)
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Names will be forwarded to appropriate Members of Congress and will be added to the national Constituent Network so that persons may be kept abreast of Congressional developments.

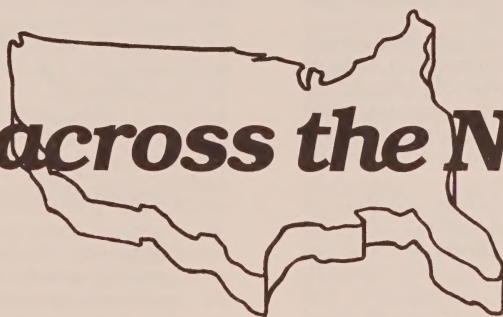
Please return petition to: Gay Rights National Lobby, 930 F St., N.W., Suite 611, Washington, D.C. 20004

GRNL

“Plan For Action”

In the halls of Congress

and across the Nation



The Gay Rights National Lobby

GRNL'S PLAN FOR ACTION:

In response to frequent pleas from both individuals and groups for suggested ways in which they can aid in the national effort to secure basic civil rights for this nation's gay men and lesbians, the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) has developed the following 10-point "Plan For Action."

While not everyone will be able to participate in each and every portion of this comprehensive set of objectives, there is, no doubt, at least one — and probably several — areas where your help can be extremely beneficial. Every bit of information collected, every contact made, every supporter enlisted — in short, every activity, no matter how inconsequential it may seem — can have a significant impact on our cumulative efforts.

The ultimate goal of this plan is, of course, to generate Congressional support for passage of national legislation guaranteeing the basic civil rights of this nation's lesbians and gay men. While this goal is still a long way from reality, what we do

now is important. There are many significant battles yet to be fought, and many hours of hard work which are yet to come before that day arrives. This plan, while it may not be the ultimate answer to our problems, can go far toward achieving that goal.

However, it is not designed specifically as a one-way street, with all of your efforts flowing in to our Washington office with nothing but a vague promise of some far-off day of bliss in return. GRNL's "Plan For Action" is also practical on the local level — it provides tools and information, techniques and suggestions — in short, plans for *local* action to achieve *local* goals in the bargain. Of course, GRNL hopes to benefit from your hours of hard work and dedication, but we also feel that sharing our suggestions with "grass-roots" supporters can be of benefit to *you*!

This, then, is as much *your* plan as it is ours. Without you, it will not work. With your help, together we can change things. . .

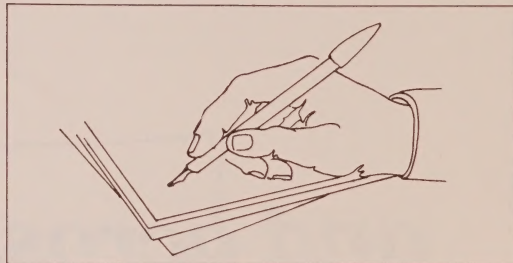
1 NATIONAL CONSTITUENT NETWORK

The Moral Majority, Christian Voice and other anti-gay lobbies generate hundreds of letters from almost every Congressional district. These so-called "guardians of morality" flood the mails with their anti-gay rhetoric — and *your* Senators and Representatives hear their voices.

However, Members of Congress say they almost never hear from *pro-gay* constituents. In spite of polls which statistically show majority support for civil rights for gay men and lesbians, legislators tell us that this support is "not in *my* district." Despite the vitality of our movement in many areas, in this instance *we have failed!*

The Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) is working hard to reverse this pattern. We are attempting at this time to build a National Constituent Network to help put our message across. The GRNL staff in Washington and organizers around the nation — known as Field Associates — are trying to locate supporters throughout the nation. With this critical identification process accomplished, we will be able to utilize this information to generate letters from constituents at key times with "Congressional Action Alerts" and other means of direct constituent contact. The following are some key ways that you can help to advance the Network:

- A. Identification of Field Associates and/or Organizational Liaisons in each Congressional District — people willing to serve as links between the national lobbying



campaign and grass-roots supporters.

- B. Petition Campaigns to identify pro-justice supporters throughout the nation. These campaigns are most useful when specific goals and/or deadlines are included.
- C. Utilization of Gay/Lesbian Pride Day (or other occasions where large numbers of gay people congregate) for Constituent Network organizing — a chance to turn gay pride into gay power.
- D. Post Card Campaigns utilizing gay and lesbian gathering places such as bars and/or coffeehouses.
- E. Letter-Writing Parties (generally more useful for those people with stronger commitments than those people who normally participate in post card campaigns.)

2 MOBILIZATION OF NON-GAY SUPPORT

It is essential that the issue of civil rights for gay people be presented as the "mainstream" issue that it actually is. To assist in demonstrating the

respectability of our issue, it is important to gain the support of prominent non-gay organizations and community leaders. Further, it is essential that we

mobilize that support to play an *active* role in our struggle.

Some key ways to utilize non-gay support in making civil rights for gays a respectable political issue are:

- A. Identifying key public opinion leaders in your area — elected officials, religious, labor, business, medical, health, minority and political leaders — that may have indicated support for justice and civil rights for gay people. By gathering and transmitting these names, addresses and phone numbers, you can assist GRNL in developing a national "Endorsement List" for gay civil rights.
- B. Essentially this same process is necessary for other opinion leaders who have not yet taken a public position one way or the other, but who you feel should be approached for support.
- C. Seeking help from local leaders of organizations which are strongly supportive of

our goals — The National Organization for Women, the National Women's Political Caucus, Americans for Democratic Action, the ACLU, and others, including (if possible):

- Letters from leaders of these groups to Congressional representatives, and/or
 - Direct meetings of these supporters with Members of Congress, when possible.
- D. Seeking the immediate and direct support of local and state League of Women Voters organizations. National League policy calls for non-discrimination for all persons. State and local leagues can, therefore, promptly come out for local, state and *national* gay civil rights legislation without the necessity of a lengthy process of study, which is often the case with other issues. It is partly *because* of the serious deliberations which the League takes, however, that their aid can be of such immense importance.

3 OPPOSE THE SO-CALLED "FAMILY PROTECTION ACT"

The "Family Protection Act" is an omnibus "shopping list" for the New Right which includes not only a number of anti-gay provisions, but also planks which are anti-women, anti-black, and anti-labor.

The chief sponsor of the bill is President Reagan's closest ally on Capitol Hill, Senator Paul Laxalt (R-Nevada). He recently announced intentions to separate the bill he introduced in the last Congress into four separate pieces of legislation to be introduced independently in this session. As a chief priority of the Moral Majority and other New Right lobbies, these bills will receive Hearings before the Senate's Committee on Labor and Human Resources, chaired by right-leaning Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

The unthinkable is possible — this legislation could actually be passed into law. Therefore, in addition to other techniques suggested here, we urge gay and lesbian organizations to help start—or

at least participate in — state and local "Ad Hoc Coalitions Against the So-Called Family Protection Legislation."

However, it is essential that the battle not appear to be merely "the gays v. the family." We therefore urge that you solicit participation by other groups, particularly religious groups, the ACLU, the National Education Association, labor unions, and others in the local coalition — groups with the broadest and most "mainstream" support possible.

For similar reasons, it would be ideal to convince a multi-issue group such as the local ACLU to initiate the local coalition. With printed letterhead (including, if possible, a list of affiliated groups) the local coalition can then participate in press conferences, approach local media for editorials against this so-called "protective" legislation, and engage in other public efforts, such as direct meetings, letter-writing campaigns, etc.

4 DIRECT MEETINGS WITH SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Constituent communication in the form of meetings, post cards, letters, etc. is essential if Members of Congress are to understand that this issue affects *their own constituents*.

Senators and Representatives like to talk to voters. Whether you speak solely as an individual, as a representative of an organization, or as an unofficial "spokesperson" for constituents affected by the issue, the legislator wants to make a good impression on *you* — he/she needs *your* votes, and those of *your friends*.

As noted previously, most legislators fail to understand that this issue affects *their* district. When they think of gay people, they think of New York City, San Francisco and Hollywood, but they

seldom speak of the folks back home in Salt Lake City, Sioux Ste. Marie or Hoboken. Because of ignorance, stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding this issue, your meeting can be *very* important.

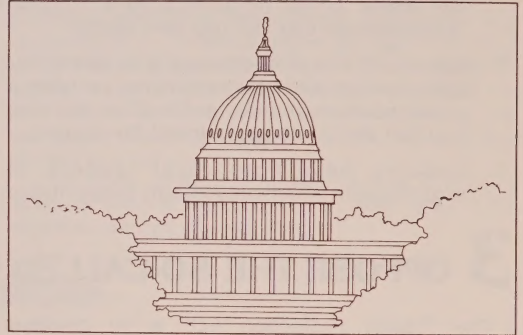
GRNL will shortly be releasing a Legislative Bulletin (number three) which will recommend ways to make your meetings more effective. In the meantime, however, here are a few thoughts which have been helpful in the past:

- A. Call the legislator's nearest field office and ask to set up an appointment with him/her on the next visit home. Once the appointment is scheduled, work to keep your meeting *small*.

Attendance at the meeting should not be used as a reward for group commitment, financial backing, etc., but should be based on the criteria of who could most effectively accomplish your goal. *Large meetings are not nearly as effective as small ones!*

- B. Get started on the right foot by complimenting the legislator on something he or she has done that you admire, whether or not it relates to the issue you wish to discuss. If nothing else, you can always use something general like "We appreciate your frequent trips home. They really show your concern for your home district." If you'd like to be more specific, but are stumped for ideas, contact us and we will be glad to help.
- C. Have your facts straight. Keep your case short — five to ten minutes at most. Begin by indicting clearly what you want him/her to do, and explain how the issue affects you and others in the district. Speak from a shared perspective when possible. Even politicians from starkly different political philosophies from your own have some area where you share points of view. For example, with progressive legislators you can relate the gay civil rights issue to historic civil rights tradition. With conservatives, stress less government intervention into the lives of individuals and the right to privacy. If you do not feel adequate in your assessment of where your particular legislator stands, contact us and we'll help.
- D. Let the legislator talk. It is ironic that constituents often have a better chance to deal directly with Members of Congress than lobbyists. *You can be our eyes and ears!* so that we can sharpen our response to his/her concerns.
- E. Don't decide that a legislator is against you merely because (s)he raises difficult questions or possesses an outwardly negative response to the issue. Often the process involves *re-education*. Don't respond either defensively or offensively in such cases — neither works. Keep your "cool", and remember that Congressional representatives are just human.
- F. Sometimes elected officials will try to avoid taking a position. Unless the representative is *clearly* against your position, *tactfully* press them for their position. Such phrases as "Are you willing to co-sponsor the legislation?" or

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- G. If you are unable to set up an actual meeting with your legislator, do the next-best thing — meet with his or her staff members. Obviously, this "second-hand" type of contact is not as effective as an actual face-to-face meeting with your representative, and it often is difficult to solicit a commitment one way or the other. But Congressional staff *do* have an immense impact on the positions of the Members of Congress for whom they work. If this is the only kind of meeting which you can arrange, remember that a Congressperson's staff act as his/her eyes and ears — treat them with the same respect as you would the legislator, and try not to condescend to them as mere "underlings." These people can be extremely important in swaying positions, and the impressions you make on *them* are almost as important as that which you hope to make on the legislators themselves.
- H. Last, but surely not least, let GRNL know the outcome of your meetings(s). Keep us informed. Help us to know when we need to act. GRNL is working for *you*, but we need *your* help.

5 DEMONSTRATE A "COMPELLING NEED" FOR GAY/LESBIAN RIGHTS

There has been a real tendency on the part of Members of Congress — and probably most other elected officials as well — to try to avoid taking a position on controversial issues. This is particularly true if they cannot see a clear-cut and compelling need for such legislation.

If you are like many of us, you may be saying to yourself about now that "surely this can't apply to

our cause... After all these years of pickets and protests, surely they've *got* to realize there is a real need." Unfortunately, the combination of our "invisibility," the difficulty in documenting discrimination, and the fact that elected officials often relate only to cases from their own district or states (cases of which they may or may not even be aware), leaves us with a clear and critical task to be

accomplished — to *demonstrate a compelling need for the legislation*.

We believe that this particular problem goes far beyond merely convincing elected officials. The gay and lesbian communities themselves have clearly not shared the urgency of the movement for lesbian/gay civil rights legislation — legislation which can provide legal recourse to discrimination in employment, housing, etc., and which can substantially ease the constant fear of “discovery.”

To change this situation, there are several key steps we can take:

A. Document Discrimination:

GRNL's Research Division recently kicked off a campaign to systematically study discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations. We are also seeking information which could lend support to demonstrating patterns of discrimination and incidents of anti-gay oppression with regard to immigration and the military.

The Research Division now has a team devoting its exclusive attention to these areas. We are asking concerned individuals and organizations across the country to assist in this effort. Those who have been subjected to anti-gay discrimination, or know of others who have, are urged to write the discrimination Project, GRNL, Research Division, P.O. Box 1892, Washington, D.C. 20013.

If possible, people should send personal accounts of discriminatory treatment, written in narrative style. GRNL would, of course, honor the wishes of those who desire confidentiality. To supplement these case histories, GRNL is also looking for news articles, clippings, or other material from any source which may provide evidence of discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

B. Publicize Cases of Discrimination to Appeal to a Sense of Fairness:

We have a sense that one problem involved in Congressional non-perception of gay issues has been that when a good “clean” case of discrimination has been found, it has not been used to its fullest advantage, (though, perhaps we may be wrong as this relates to your particular area.) We believe that effectively publicizing such cases can significantly advance the potential level of support from Representatives/Senators. Cases which emphasize the unfairness of anti-gay discrimination and which demonstrate that gay civil rights is not a “fringe” or “bizarre” idea, but rather a “respectable” and “mainstream” issue dealing with *basic civil rights* normally enjoyed by all other Americans.

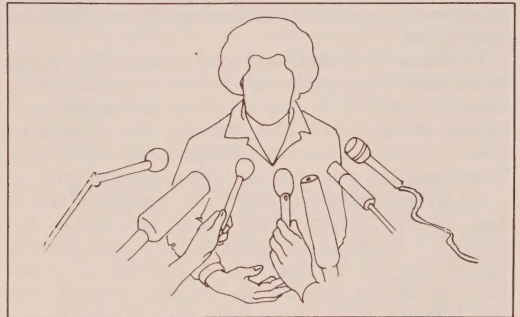
We have found that cases where the individual has been “discovered” to be gay rather than those cases where she/he has “come out” are probably most effective. The “come out” situation allows many people the opportunity to fall back on an irrational

dismissal of the discrimination involved by merely accusing the affected person of “flaunting,” while “discovered” cases more effectively appeal to a basic sense of fairness and justice.

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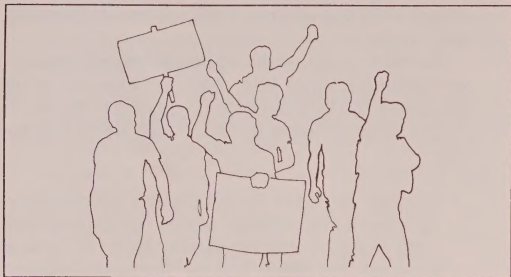
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- Call a Press Conference on the case (if timely). Often you will need a creative touch in order to attract the press or get them to follow through with a story. TV and radio talk shows are also useful.
- Finally, set up one-to-one meetings with your Senators/Representatives. You may wish to actually include the individual involved in your case, if he or she would be effective in that situation.

Although you may find yourself with a choice of several very good cases to use in your efforts, focus on one or two. Just as it was more effective to focus on a single known individual who lost his/her life in Vietnam rather than to cite difficult-to-comprehend statistics, citing a *single case*, if it is solid and defensible, is probably the most effective way to go.

6 PUBLIC PROTEST AT A MEMBER'S DISTRICT OFFICE IF (S)HE SUPPORTS ANTI-GAY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION



The Moral Majority and their cronies have proven that constituent pressure — even in the extreme — can have a major impact on public policy decisions. Although many elected officials will be the first to tell you privately how obnoxious they feel Moral Majority to be, many Members of Congress are also intimidated by them and dread the grief they get from that self-righteous crew if the Members choose

7 TAKE ACTION ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

In general, many of the previous steps of GRNL's Plan For Action will also apply to the immigration issue. A combination of constituent pressure, in various forms, and the establishment of broad-based support from both gay and non-gay public opinion leaders and organizations for this issue will be essential to ensure positive legislative action on this matter.

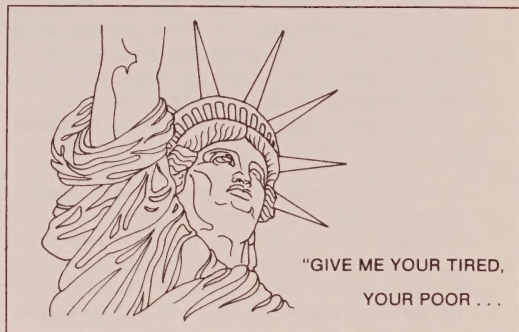
The issue lends itself well to a number of key areas of concern. There is, indeed, a clear and compelling need for reform in this area, as witnessed by a variety of cases in recent months. The issue is so clear-cut that it is hard for our opposition not to look "disrespectful" by opposing this simple reform.

We would stress one particular area of action on this issue: Contact your local newspaper (or electronic media, if appropriate) and urge them to editorialize on the subject. A number of major national dailies (including *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*) have done so already, but the *REAL* impact will come on the issue when local papers, such as the *Kalamazoo Herald* or the

to support a pro-justice position on an anti-gay amendment.

We must make it perfectly clear that any such amendments which would deny gay and lesbian citizens access to various government programs and services are an *outrage!* Properly presented the general public will agree with our opposition. Members of Congress must be made aware that an anti-justice vote on such an amendment will result in at least as much grief and negative publicity as a pro-justice vote would generate from the other side. *But don't threaten action in advance!*

We recognize that for many, public protests, pickets, etc. go against the grain, and that not everyone is comfortable in participating in such events. But well-thought-out protests which show elected officials the negative consequences of their actions and which show the public the injustice of the position taken by the Senator/Representative can be very effective.



Oregonian also do so. If your local papers have already taken an editorial position on the issue or do so after (or as a result of) your efforts, *send copies to GRNL immediately.* If you want copies of other editorials or background materials to help convince your local paper to take an editorial position, contact the Gay Rights National Lobby.

8 MAKE OUR OPPONENTS' POSITIONS LOOK "UNRESPECTABLE"

Work to ensure that our opponents' public image is an actual reflection of their positions (read that as negative). If our opponents are clearly understood to be the "bad guys" by Congressional representatives, take advantage of it. When these so-called "guardians of morality" fulminate against you, it makes you look better. Their strident, shrill and intemperate remarks can work against them. We must make sure that we don't fall into the same trap.

Constantly remind the public that these groups' ultimate goals are to impose their brand of morality on *everyone*, even if their attacks are currently

aimed at gays. There is overwhelming evidence which outlines their goals — the banning of books from schools and public libraries, support for anti-fornication laws regulating the private behavior of heterosexuals, etc. By using this information, we can show the general public that it is not merely benign altruism that should lead them to support our fight for justice. *They must be made to realize that they have a vested interest in defeating these self-righteous fanatics too!*

Another method of making our opponents appear as unrespectable as they actually are is through careful analysis of their local leaders' positions on

past issues such as civil rights for racial minorities, rights for women, or overt bigotry against Catholics or Jews, etc. We believe that careful examination will reveal that the same folks currently leading anti-gay crusades led similar fights against others in the past. Although you may strongly *suspect* this to be the case, *do not use it publicly unless you can document this suspicion as being true.* You may

also wish to contact GRNL to discuss the best ways to accomplish this documentation.

Don't hesitate to take these steps. Our opponents obviously would do these things — and more. Remember: *Their anti-justice positions are NOT respectable. Our stand on the side of justice for all people IS!*

9 UTILIZE ELECTIONS TO PRESS PRO-JUSTICE POSITIONS

"The groups that win their legislative fights are the ones that get involved in Congressional elections," says Brent Blackwelder, chairman of the League of Conservative Voters. "Participating actively in elections is important because it shows that you have clout."

Elections and your efforts during the preceeding campaigns can have a tremendous impact on the support your Senator or Representative may give to the national lesbian/gay civil rights legislation.

This is particularly important because many legislators mistakenly believe that support for gay civil rights is politically damaging at election time.

There has been a vague feeling for a long time — not just in our community, but generally — that politics is "dirty business" and that it is "beneath our dignity" to participate in it. We can continue to follow this approach — but only at our own peril.

Participation in Congressional campaigns is a no-lose proposition. If your candidate wins, great — you've supported *and worked for* the winner. If he or she is not successful, the chances are that the winning candidate will recognize nevertheless the fact that you provided contributions and/or volunteer work. (S)he will *at least* see our side as one that is within the realm of serious political concerns — which, in many cases is a major advancement.

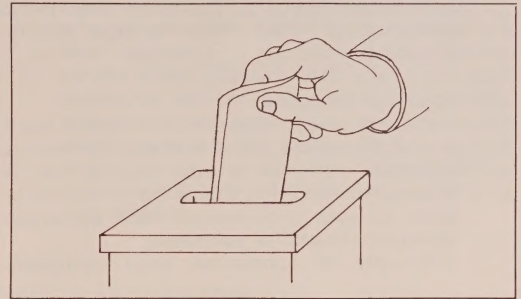
The number of persons you can muster for a given campaign will be limited. That very thought can make you feel unimportant, and could lead to no action at all. But even a small number of people can have a major impact — and the word will get around quickly that you are a "player" in the political game.

Although GRNL will shortly be releasing yet another Legislative Bulletin (number four) concerning methods for having an impact and building support of gay civil rights through participation in elections, the following are a few avenues which can be utilized in the meantime:

A. Voter Registration.

The "New Christian Right" received national attention for supposedly registering millions of new voters, supposedly all "born-again Christians." Whether or not they really did what they were credited with doing, it is true that one of the best ways to affect close elections is to register large numbers of previously unregistered voters.

Most information indicates that lesbians and gay men are already registered in large numbers, but any random survey of the gay community will probably reveal major room for



improvement.

In the future, we will be releasing yet another Legislative Bulletin dealing specifically with this subject. However, we would note one hint which can aid both on a national and a local level: When you do a voter registration drive, *make sure to obtain at least two copies of all names and addresses* before you submit the forms/cards to the voter registrar or county clerk — one for your organization's use (to make sure that these newly registered votes turn out on election day) and one to send to GRNL (so we can add their names to our Constituent Network.)

B. Candidate Questionnaires and Forums

These tools can be especially useful when it comes to "endorsing" one candidate over another. Questionnaires should be worded so that the questions relate to specific issues (such as immigration or employment security legislation). Generally worded questions may allow the candidate to say "yes, I support civil rights" while avoiding the issue of gay men and lesbians entirely. Questions, however, should not be demeaning or embarrassing to the candidate (such as the "when did you stop beating your wife?" variety). Try to avoid such "loaded" questions, but at the same time frame your questionnaires to elicit as much *specific* information as possible. For instance, a question such as "If elected, would you be willing to co-sponsor legislation such as the previously introduced Weiss-Waxman bill?" would be useful for soliciting the responses you may seek.

Candidate Forums, too, provide a personal glimpse into the thinking of a particular candidate you feel needs your support. Political clubs often sponsor such events for local elections, and it is surprising how many

candidates vie for the "choice" seats on the dias. Public exposure is the name of the game at election time, and *any* way that a candidate can achieve it is looked upon as beneficial to the candidate. Forums also allow for personal contact and spontaneous answers, where questionnaires can be "misplaced" or "padded" with well-thought-out answers designed to appeal to a particular interest group without making political commitments. Public forums, on the other hand, put the candidate "on the spot" and often answers to questions from the audience are more reflective of their true feelings and/or prejudices.

C. Volunteer Activities

It is very easy to "endorse" a candidate, but it is next to useless unless that endorsement is politically powerful or your organization is extremely strong. You will, in any case, need to back up your endorsement with campaign contributions and/or volunteers.

Virtually all candidates need volunteers

(except, perhaps, those who have been in office for generations).

Physically take your group of volunteers down to the campaign headquarters the first time out. If people you have asked to come just trickle in, the candidate or campaign manager might never know how much help you have actually provided. But if you can show up *en masse* with ten or twenty people, campaign officials will understand that our cause is *actively* working on their campaign.

To line up your volunteers, plan on calling five to six times as many people as you actually need. If your area is like most, less than half of those who say they will help actually show up.

There are a wide variety of volunteer chores: Door-to-door canvassing, telephoning, fold-and-stuff operations for mailing, etc. The campaign committee will plug you into the right spot.

D. Possible creation of a "Political Action Committee" (PAC)

E. Get Out the Vote

10 CONTINUE PRESSURE FOR GAY CIVIL RIGHTS REFORM AT THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL

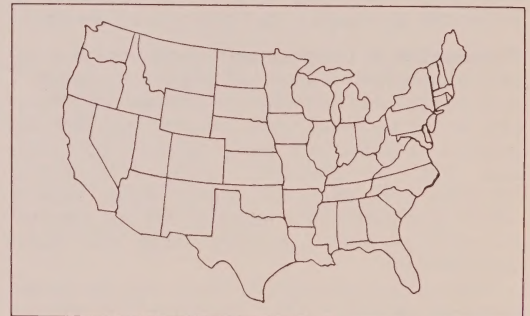
At first glance, it may seem difficult to understand how this may relate to the national legislation or the national legislative campaign. But it quickly becomes apparent that an aggressive local and/or state effort can assist the national campaign:

A. Your efforts for local or State legislation reinforce the fact that gay civil rights legislation effects constituents — and reinforces this fact to BOTH local and national office holders. Presently, it is far too easy for a Legislator to dismiss the issue as being one which impacts only those in big cities.

B. By vigorously and aggressively pressing our legislative agenda at all levels throughout the nation, we force our opponents into "spreading themselves thin" — making their task far more difficult. If they can concentrate their anti-gay efforts in one or two locations where we have our "best chances" for success, they can be far more effective in curbing our efforts. We must force them to spread themselves thin by fighting us everywhere.

We therefore believe that local and state legislation should be pressed — even in hardcore conservative areas. In the context of the fact that no controversial social justice legislation has ever been passed quickly — even in the best of political climates — there is simply no reason to delay for some "better time." There must be a "wear 'em down" phase before the legislation can ever pass. It is best to begin that now — so that when the time comes we will be prepared to act.

There are those in the gay community who think



our beliefs are mistaken — that it is best to "let sleeping dogs lie." They feel that if we just "remain quiet" maybe these insidious "morality" forces won't push their anti-gay agenda. This ignores the fact, however, that we *currently* have a situation in most parts of this country where lesbians and gay men can be fired from their jobs or evicted from their homes *simply for being gay!* And it also ignores the fact that at its base the mentality of these so-called "guardians of morality" is that of bullies. As an article in *Christopher Street* recently pointed out, bullies aren't appeased but encouraged by a victim's reluctance to defend him- or herself.

So, while we acknowledge that there are exceptions, and agree that strategy must be carefully thought through, we also believe that an aggressive justice-oriented posture serves all of us, no matter at what level of government this may take place. In the long run, the struggle we *each* face individually is the same struggle we *all* must face together.

mobilize that support to play an *active* role in our struggle.

Some key ways to utilize non-gay support in making civil rights for gays a respectable political issue are:

- A. Identifying key public opinion leaders in your area — elected officials, religious, labor, business, medical, health, minority and political leaders — that may have indicated support for justice and civil rights for gay people. By gathering and transmitting these names, addresses and phone numbers, you can assist GRNL in developing a national "Endorsement List" for gay civil rights.
- B. Essentially this same process is necessary for other opinion leaders who have not yet taken a public position one way or the other, but who you feel should be approached for support.
- C. Seeking help from local leaders of organizations which are strongly supportive of

our goals — The National Organization for Women, the National Women's Political Caucus, Americans for Democratic Action, the ACLU, and others, including (if possible):

- Letters from leaders of these groups to Congressional representatives, and/or
 - Direct meetings of these supporters with Members of Congress, when possible.
- D. Seeking the immediate and direct support of local and state League of Women Voters organizations. National League policy calls for non-discrimination for all persons. State and local leagues can, therefore, promptly come out for local, state and *national* gay civil rights legislation without the necessity of a lengthy process of study, which is often the case with other issues. It is partly *because* of the serious deliberations which the League takes, however, that their aid can be of such immense importance.

3 OPPOSE THE SO-CALLED "FAMILY PROTECTION ACT"

The "Family Protection Act" is an omnibus "shopping list" for the New Right which includes not only a number of anti-gay provisions, but also planks which are anti-women, anti-black, and anti-labor.

The chief sponsor of the bill is President Reagan's closest ally on Capitol Hill, Senator Paul Laxalt (R-Nevada). He recently announced intentions to separate the bill he introduced in the last Congress into four separate pieces of legislation to be introduced independently in this session. As a chief priority of the Moral Majority and other New Right lobbies, these bills will receive Hearings before the Senate's Committee on Labor and Human Resources, chaired by right-leaning Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

The unthinkable is possible — this legislation could actually be passed into law. Therefore, in addition to other techniques suggested here, we urge gay and lesbian organizations to help start — or

at least participate in — state and local "Ad Hoc Coalitions Against the So-Called Family Protection Legislation."

However, it is essential that the battle not appear to be merely "the gays v. the family." We therefore urge that you solicit participation by other groups, particularly religious groups, the ACLU, the National Education Association, labor unions, and others in the local coalition — groups with the broadest and most "mainstream" support possible.

For similar reasons, it would be ideal to convince a multi-issue group such as the local ACLU to initiate the local coalition. With printed letterhead (including, if possible, a list of affiliated groups) the local coalition can then participate in press conferences, approach local media for editorials against this so-called "protective" legislation, and engage in other public efforts, such as direct meetings, letter-writing campaigns, etc.

4 DIRECT MEETINGS WITH SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Constituent communication in the form of meetings, post cards, letters, etc. is essential if Members of Congress are to understand that this issue affects *their own constituents*.

Senators and Representatives like to talk to voters. Whether you speak solely as an individual, as a representative of an organization, or as an unofficial "spokesperson" for constituents affected by the issue, the legislator wants to make a good impression on *you* — he/she needs *your* votes, and those of *your friends*.

As noted previously, most legislators fail to understand that this issue affects *their* district. When they think of gay people, they think of New York City, San Francisco and Hollywood, but they

seldom speak of the folks back home in Salt Lake City, Sioux Ste. Marie or Hoboken. Because of ignorance, stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding this issue, your meeting can be very important.

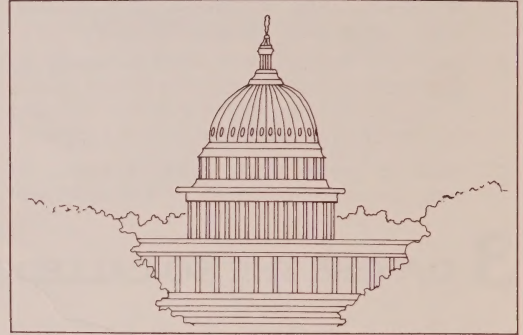
GRNL will shortly be releasing a Legislative Bulletin (number three) which will recommend ways to make your meetings more effective. In the meantime, however, here are a few thoughts which have been helpful in the past:

- A. Call the legislator's nearest field office and ask to set up an appointment with him/her on the next visit home. Once the appointment is scheduled, work to keep your meeting *small*.

Attendance at the meeting should not be used as a reward for group commitment, financial backing, etc., but should be based on the criteria of who could most effectively accomplish your goal. *Large meetings are not nearly as effective as small ones!*

- B. Get started on the right foot by complimenting the legislator on something he or she has done that you admire, whether or not it relates to the issue you wish to discuss. If nothing else, you can always use something general like "We appreciate your frequent trips home. They really show your concern for your home district." If you'd like to be more specific, but are stumped for ideas, contact us and we will be glad to help.
- C. Have your facts straight. Keep your case short — five to ten minutes at most. Begin by indicting clearly what you want him/her to do, and explain how the issue affects you and others in the district. Speak from a shared perspective when possible. Even politicians from starkly different political philosophies from your own have some area where you share points of view. For example, with progressive legislators you can relate the gay civil rights issue to historic civil rights tradition. With conservatives, stress less government intervention into the lives of individuals and the right to privacy. If you do not feel adequate in your assessment of where your particular legislator stands, contact us and we'll help.
- D. Let the legislator talk. It is ironic that constituents often have a better chance to deal directly with Members of Congress than lobbyists. *You can be our eyes and ears!* so that we can sharpen our response to his/her concerns.
- E. Don't decide that a legislator is against you merely because (s)he raises difficult questions or possesses an outwardly negative response to the issue. Often the process involves *re-education*. Don't respond either defensively or offensively in such cases — neither works. Keep your "cool", and remember that Congressional representatives are just human.
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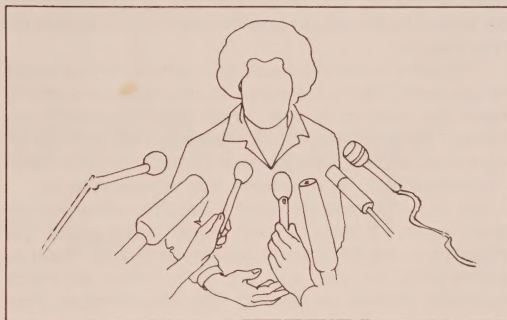
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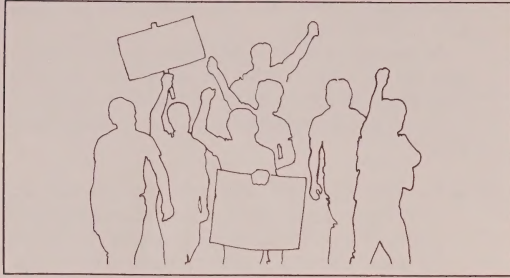
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- Set up pickets and/or protests at the site of such discrimination if recent enough or if you feel the discrimination was blatant enough to warrant such action (We cannot make a blanket statement that you should *always* picket or that you should *never* protest. The key should be: “Does it serve the goal of demonstrating the unfairness of discrimination *and* will it reinforce the message that gay civil rights is a respectable, mainstream issue.”)



- Call a Press Conference on the case (if timely). Often you will need a creative touch in order to attract the press or get them to follow through with a story. TV and radio talk shows are also useful.
- Finally, set up one-to-one meetings with your Senators/Representatives. You may wish to actually include the individual involved in your case, if he or she would be effective in that situation.

Although you may find yourself with a choice of several very good cases to use in your efforts, focus on one or two. Just as it was more effective to focus on a single known individual who lost his/her life in Vietnam rather than to cite difficult-to-comprehend statistics, citing a *single* case, if it is solid and defensible, is probably the most effective way to go.

6 PUBLIC PROTEST AT A MEMBER'S DISTRICT OFFICE IF (S)HE SUPPORTS ANTI-GAY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION



The Moral Majority and their cronies have proven that constituent pressure — even in the extreme — can have a major impact on public policy decisions. Although many elected officials will be the first to tell you privately how obnoxious they feel Moral Majority to be, many Members of Congress are also intimidated by them and dread the grief they get from that self-righteous crew if the Members choose

7 TAKE ACTION ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

In general, many of the previous steps of GRNL's Plan For Action will also apply to the immigration issue. A combination of constituent pressure, in various forms, and the establishment of broad-based support from both gay and non-gay public opinion leaders and organizations for this issue will be essential to ensure positive legislative action on this matter.

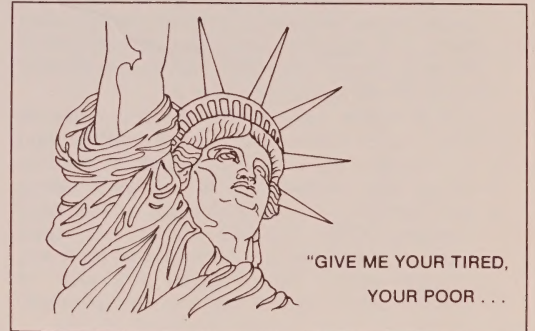
The issue lends itself well to a number of key areas of concern. There is, indeed, a clear and compelling need for reform in this area, as witnessed by a variety of cases in recent months. The issue is so clear-cut that it is hard for our opposition not to look "disrespectful" by opposing this simple reform.

We would stress one particular area of action on this issue: Contact your local newspaper (or electronic media, if appropriate) and urge them to editorialize on the subject. A number of major national dailies (including *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*) have done so already, but the *REAL* impact will come on the issue when local papers, such as the *Kalamazoo Herald* or the

to support a pro-justice position on an anti-gay amendment.

We must make it perfectly clear that any such amendments which would deny gay and lesbian citizens access to various government programs and services are an *outrage!* Properly presented the general public will agree with our opposition. Members of Congress must be made aware that an anti-justice vote on such an amendment will result in at least as much grief and negative publicity as a pro-justice vote would generate from the other side. *But don't threaten action in advance!*

We recognize that for many, public protests, pickets, etc. go against the grain, and that not everyone is comfortable in participating in such events. But well-thought-out protests which show elected officials the negative consequences of their actions and which show the public the injustice of the position taken by the Senator/Representative can be very effective.



Oregonian also do so. If your local papers have already taken an editorial position on the issue or do so after (or as a result of) your efforts, *send copies to GRNL immediately*. If you want copies of other editorials or background materials to help convince your local paper to take an editorial position, contact the Gay Rights National Lobby.

8 MAKE OUR OPPONENTS' POSITIONS LOOK "UNRESPECTABLE"

Work to ensure that our opponents' public image is an actual reflection of their positions (read that as negative). If our opponents are clearly understood to be the "bad guys" by Congressional representatives, take advantage of it. When these so-called "guardians of morality" fulminate against you, it makes you look better. Their strident, shrill and intemperate remarks can work against them. We must make sure that we don't fall into the same trap.

Constantly remind the public that these groups' ultimate goals are to impose their brand of morality on *everyone*, even if their attacks are currently

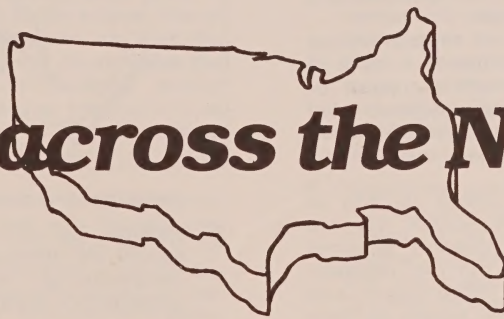
aimed at gays. There is overwhelming evidence which outlines their goals — the banning of books from schools and public libraries, support for anti-fornication laws regulating the private behavior of heterosexuals, etc. By using this information, we can show the general public that it is not merely benign altruism that should lead them to support our fight for justice. *They must be made to realize that they have a vested interest in defeating these self-righteous fanatics too!*

Another method of making our opponents appear as unrespectable as they actually are is through careful analysis of their local leaders' positions on

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The Gay Rights National Lobby

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While not everyone will be able to participate in each and every portion of this comprehensive set of objectives, there is, no doubt, at least one — and probably several — areas where your help can be extremely beneficial. Every bit of information collected, every contact made, every supporter enlisted — in short, every activity, no matter how inconsequential it may seem — can have a significant impact on our cumulative efforts.

The ultimate goal of this plan is, of course, to generate Congressional support for passage of national legislation guaranteeing the basic civil rights of this nation's lesbians and gay men. While this goal is still a long way from reality, what we do

now is important. There are many significant battles yet to be fought, and many hours of hard work which are yet to come before that day arrives. This plan, while it may not be the ultimate answer to our problems, can go far toward achieving that goal.

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This, then, is as much *your* plan as it is ours. Without you, it will not work. With your help, together we can change things. . .

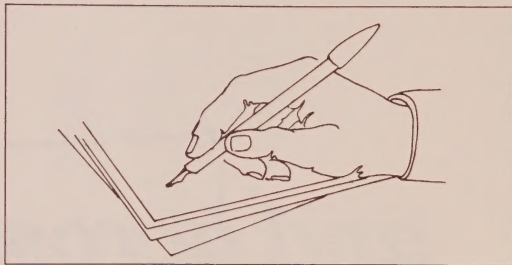
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However, Members of Congress say they almost never hear from *pro-gay* constituents. In spite of polls which statistically show majority support for civil rights for gay men and lesbians, legislators tell us that this support is "not in *my* district." Despite the vitality of our movement in many areas, in this instance *we have failed!*

The Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) is working hard to reverse this pattern. We are attempting at this time to build a National Constituent Network to help put our message across. The GRNL staff in Washington and organizers around the nation — known as Field Associates — are trying to locate supporters throughout the nation. With this critical identification process accomplished, we will be able to utilize this information to generate letters from constituents at key times with "Congressional Action Alerts" and other means of direct constituent contact. The following are some key ways that you can help to advance the Network:

- A. Identification of Field Associates and/or Organizational Liaisons in each Congressional District — people willing to serve as links between the national lobbying



campaign and grass-roots supporters.

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respectability of our issue, it is important to gain the support of prominent non-gay organizations and community leaders. Further, it is essential that we

past issues such as civil rights for racial minorities, rights for women, or overt bigotry against Catholics or Jews, etc. We believe that careful examination will reveal that the same folks currently leading anti-gay crusades led similar fights against others in the past. Although you may strongly *suspect* this to be the case, *do not use it publicly unless you can document this suspicion as being true.* You may

also wish to contact GRNL to discuss the best way to accomplish this documentation.

Don't hesitate to take these steps. Our opponen obviously would do these things — and more. Remember: *Their anti-justice positions are NOT respectable. Our stand on the side of justice for all people IS!*

9 UTILIZE ELECTIONS TO PRESS PRO-JUSTICE POSITIONS

"The groups that win their legislative fights are the ones that get involved in Congressional elections," says Brent Blackwelder, chairman of the League of Conservative Voters. "Participating actively in elections is important because it shows that you have clout."

Elections and your efforts during the preceeding campaigns can have a tremendous impact on the support your Senator or Representative may give to the national lesbian/gay civil rights legislation.

This is particularly important because many legislators mistakenly believe that support for gay civil rights is politically damaging at election time.

There has been a vague feeling for a long time — not just in our community, but generally — that politics is "dirty business" and that it is "beneath our dignity" to participate in it. We can continue to follow this approach — but only at our own peril.

Participation in Congressional campaigns is a no-lose proposition. If your candidate wins, great — you've supported *and worked for* the winner. If he or she is not successful, the chances are that the winning candidate will recognize nevertheless the fact that you provided contributions and/or volunteer work. (S)he will *at least* see our side as one that is within the realm of serious political concerns — which, in many cases is a major advancement.

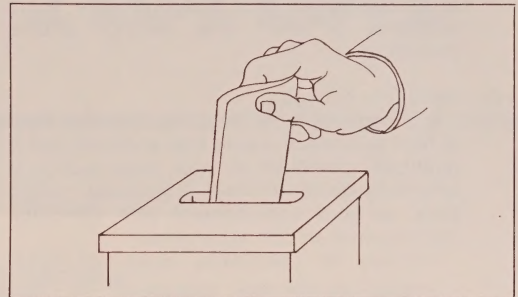
The number of persons you can muster for a given campaign will be limited. That very thought can make you feel unimportant, and could lead to no action at all. But even a small number of people can have a major impact — and the word will get around quickly that you are a "player" in the political game.

Although GRNL will shortly be releasing yet another Legislative Bulletin (number four) concerning methods for having an impact and building support of gay civil rights through participation in elections, the following are a few avenues which can be utilized in the meantime:

A. Voter Registration.

The "New Christian Right" received national attention for supposedly registering millions of new voters, supposedly all "born-again Christians." Whether or not they really did what they were credited with doing, it is true that one of the best ways to affect close elections is to register large numbers of previously unregistered voters.

Most information indicates that lesbians and gay men are already registered in large numbers, but any random survey of the gay community will probably reveal major room for



improvement.

In the future, we will be releasing yet another Legislative Bulletin dealing specifically with this subject. However, we would note one hint which can aid both on a national and a local level: When you do a voter registration drive, *make sure to obtain at least two copies of all names and addresses* before you submit the forms/cards to the voter registrar or county clerk — one for your organization's use (to make sure that these newly registered votes turn out on election day) and one to send to GRNL (so we can add their names to our Constituent Network.)

B. Candidate Questionnaires and Forums

These tools can be especially useful when it comes to "endorsing" one candidate over another. Questionnaires should be worded so that the questions relate to specific issues (such as immigration or employment security legislation). Generally worded questions may allow the candidate to say "yes, I support civil rights" while avoiding the issue of gay men and lesbians entirely. Questions, however, should not be demeaning or embarrassing to the candidate (such as the "when did you stop beating your wife?" variety). Try to avoid such "loaded" questions, but at the same time frame your questionnaires to elicit as much *specific* information as possible. For instance, a question such as "If elected, would you be willing to co-sponsor legislation such as the previously introduced Weiss-Waxman bill?" would be useful for soliciting the responses you may seek.

Candidate Forums, too, provide a personal glimpse into the thinking of a particular candidate you feel needs your support. Political clubs often sponsor such events for local elections, and it is surprising how many

candidates vie for the "choice" seats on the dias. Public exposure is the name of the game at election time, and *any way* that a candidate can achieve it is looked upon as beneficial to the candidate. Forums also allow for personal contact and spontaneous answers, where questionnaires can be "misplaced" or "padded" with well-thought-out answers designed to appeal to a particular interest group without making political commitments. Public forums, on the other hand, put the candidate "on the spot" and often answers to questions from the audience are more reflective of their true feelings and/or prejudices.

C. Volunteer Activities

It is very easy to "endorse" a candidate, but it is next to useless unless that endorsement is politically powerful or your organization is extremely strong. You will, in any case, need to back up your endorsement with campaign contributions and/or volunteers.

Virtually all candidates need volunteers

(except, perhaps, those who have been in office for generations).

Physically take your group of volunteers down to the campaign headquarters the first time out. If people you have asked to come just trickle in, the candidate or campaign manager might never know how much help you have actually provided. But if you can show up *en masse* with ten or twenty people, campaign officials will understand that our cause is *actively* working on their campaign.

To line up your volunteers, plan on calling five to six times as many people as you actually need. If your area is like most, less than half of those who say they will help actually show up.

There are a wide variety of volunteer chores: Door-to-door canvassing, telephoning, fold-and-stuff operations for mailing, etc. The campaign committee will plug you into the right spot.

D. Possible creation of a "Political Action Committee" (PAC)

E. Get Out the Vote

10 CONTINUE PRESSURE FOR GAY CIVIL RIGHTS REFORM AT THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL

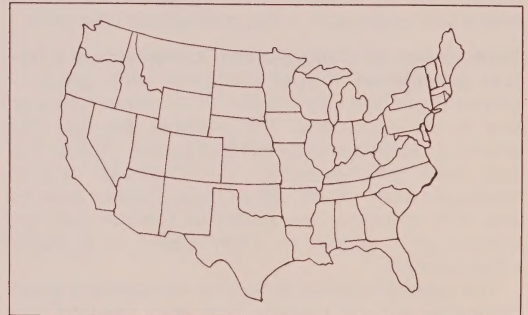
At first glance, it may seem difficult to understand how this may relate to the national legislation or the national legislative campaign. But it quickly becomes apparent that an aggressive local and/or state effort can assist the national campaign:

A. Your efforts for local or State legislation reinforce the fact that gay civil rights legislation effects constituents — and reinforces this fact to BOTH local and national office holders. Presently, it is far too easy for a Legislator to dismiss the issue as being one which impacts only those in big cities.

B. By vigorously and aggressively pressing our legislative agenda at all levels throughout the nation, we force our opponents into "spreading themselves thin" — making their task far more difficult. If they can concentrate their anti-gay efforts in one or two locations where we have our "best chances" for success, they can be far more effective in curbing our efforts. We must force them to spread themselves thin by fighting us everywhere.

We therefore believe that local and state legislation should be pressed — even in hardcore conservative areas. In the context of the fact that no controversial social justice legislation has ever been passed quickly — even in the best of political climates — there is simply no reason to delay for some "better time." There must be a "wear 'em down" phase before the legislation can ever pass. It is best to begin that now — so that when the time comes we will be prepared to act.

There are those in the gay community who think



our beliefs are mistaken — that it is best to "let sleeping dogs lie." They feel that if we just "remain quiet" maybe these insidious "morality" forces won't push their anti-gay agenda. This ignores the fact, however, that we *currently* have a situation in most parts of this country where lesbians and gay men can be fired from their jobs or evicted from their homes *simply for being gay!* And it also ignores the fact that at its base the mentality of these so-called "guardians of morality" is that of bullies. As an article in *Christopher Street* recently pointed out, bullies aren't appeased but encouraged by a victim's reluctance to defend him-or herself.

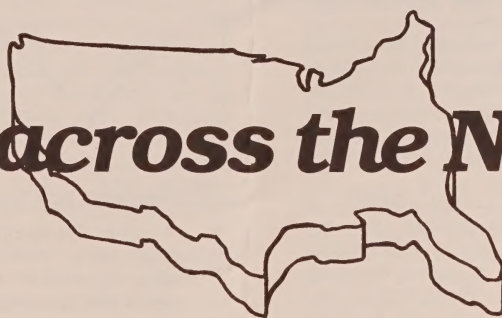
So, while we acknowledge that there are exceptions, and agree that strategy must be carefully thought through, we also believe that an aggressive justice-oriented posture serves all of us, no matter at what level of government this may take place. In the long run, the struggle we *each* face individually is the same struggle we *all* must face together.

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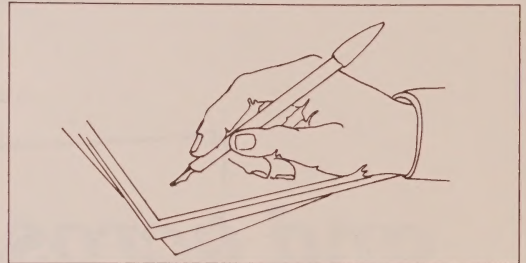
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respectability of our issue, it is important to gain the support of prominent non-gay organizations and community leaders. Further, it is essential that we

mobilize that support to play an *active* role in our struggle.

Some key ways to utilize non-gay support in making civil rights for gays a respectable political issue are:

- A. Identifying key public opinion leaders in your area — elected officials, religious, labor, business, medical, health, minority and political leaders — that may have indicated support for justice and civil rights for gay people. By gathering and transmitting these names, addresses and phone numbers, you can assist GRNL in developing a national "Endorsement List" for gay civil rights.
- B. Essentially this same process is necessary for other opinion leaders who have not yet taken a public position one way or the other, but who you feel should be approached for support.
- C. Seeking help from local leaders of organizations which are strongly supportive of

our goals — The National Organization for Women, the National Women's Political Caucus, Americans for Democratic Action, the ACLU, and others, including (if possible):

- Letters from leaders of these groups to Congressional representatives, and/or
 - Direct meetings of these supporters with Members of Congress, when possible.
- D. Seeking the immediate and direct support of local and state League of Women Voters organizations. National League policy calls for non-discrimination for all persons. State and local leagues can, therefore, promptly come out for local, state and *national* gay civil rights legislation without the necessity of a lengthy process of study, which is often the case with other issues. It is partly *because* of the serious deliberations which the League takes, however, that their aid can be of such immense importance.

3 OPPOSE THE SO-CALLED "FAMILY PROTECTION ACT"

The "Family Protection Act" is an omnibus "shopping list" for the New Right which includes not only a number of anti-gay provisions, but also planks which are anti-women, anti-black, and anti-labor.

The chief sponsor of the bill is President Reagan's closest ally on Capitol Hill, Senator Paul Laxalt (R-Nevada). He recently announced intentions to separate the bill he introduced in the last Congress into four separate pieces of legislation to be introduced independently in this session. As a chief priority of the Moral Majority and other New Right lobbies, these bills will receive Hearings before the Senate's Committee on Labor and Human Resources, chaired by right-leaning Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

The unthinkable is possible — this legislation could actually be passed into law. Therefore, in addition to other techniques suggested here, we urge gay and lesbian organizations to help start — or

at least participate in — state and local "Ad Hoc Coalitions Against the So-Called Family Protection Legislation."

However, it is essential that the battle not appear to be merely "the gays v. the family." We therefore urge that you solicit participation by other groups, particularly religious groups, the ACLU, the National Education Association, labor unions, and others in the local coalition — groups with the broadest and most "mainstream" support possible.

For similar reasons, it would be ideal to convince a multi-issue group such as the local ACLU to initiate the local coalition. With printed letterhead (including, if possible, a list of affiliated groups) the local coalition can then participate in press conferences, approach local media for editorials against this so-called "protective" legislation, and engage in other public efforts, such as direct meetings, letter-writing campaigns, etc.

4 DIRECT MEETINGS WITH SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Constituent communication in the form of meetings, post cards, letters, etc. is essential if Members of Congress are to understand that this issue affects *their own constituents*.

Senators and Representatives like to talk to voters. Whether you speak solely as an individual, as a representative of an organization, or as an unofficial "spokesperson" for constituents affected by the issue, the legislator wants to make a good impression on *you* — he/she needs *your* votes, and those of *your friends*.

As noted previously, most legislators fail to understand that this issue affects *their* district. When they think of gay people, they think of New York City, San Francisco and Hollywood, but they

seldom speak of the folks back home in Salt Lake City, Sioux Ste. Marie or Hoboken. Because of ignorance, stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding this issue, your meeting can be *very* important.

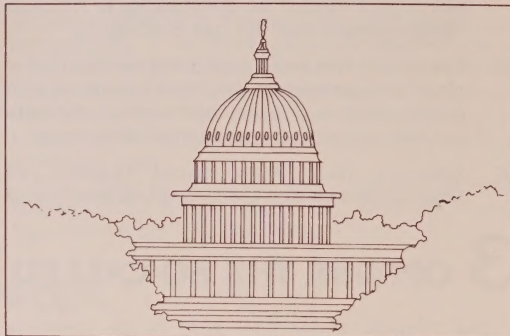
GRNL will shortly be releasing a Legislative Bulletin (number three) which will recommend ways to make your meetings more effective. In the meantime, however, here are a few thoughts which have been helpful in the past:

- A. Call the legislator's nearest field office and ask to set up an appointment with him/her on the next visit home. Once the appointment is scheduled, work to keep your meeting *small*.

Attendance at the meeting should not be used as a reward for group commitment, financial backing, etc., but should be based on the criteria of who could most effectively accomplish your goal. *Large meetings are not nearly as effective as small ones!*

- B. Get started on the right foot by complimenting the legislator on something he or she has done that you admire, whether or not it relates to the issue you wish to discuss. If nothing else, you can always use something general like "We appreciate your frequent trips home. They really show your concern for your home district." If you'd like to be more specific, but are stumped for ideas, contact us and we will be glad to help.
- C. Have your facts straight. Keep your case short — five to ten minutes at most. Begin by indicting clearly what you want him/her to do, and explain how the issue affects you and others in the district. Speak from a shared perspective when possible. Even politicians from starkly different political philosophies from your own have some area where you share points of view. For example, with progressive legislators you can relate the gay civil rights issue to historic civil rights tradition. With conservatives, stress less government intervention into the lives of individuals and the right to privacy. If you do not feel adequate in your assessment of where your particular legislator stands, contact us and we'll help.
- D. Let the legislator talk. It is ironic that constituents often have a better chance to deal directly with Members of Congress than lobbyists. *You can be our eyes and ears!* so that we can sharpen our response to his/her concerns.
- E. Don't decide that a legislator is against you merely because (s)he raises difficult questions or possesses an outwardly negative response to the issue. Often the process involves *re-education*. Don't respond either defensively or offensively in such cases — neither works. Keep your "cool", and remember that Congressional representatives are just human.
- F. Sometimes elected officials will try to avoid taking a position. Unless the representative is *clearly* against your position, *tactfully* press them for their position. Such phrases as "Are you willing to co-sponsor the legislation?" or

"Let me understand you, Representative, you will support the legislation but are not willing to co-sponsor at this time?" are ways to accomplish this goal. You've heard it before — a *negative attitude* won't help. Some representatives are easily reached, while others may take months or years of contact with constituents before they begin to realize the worthiness of our issue. No matter how "severe" or "stubborn" a legislator may appear to you, realize that (s)he *can* be reached in time — and that only *your* patient, persistent efforts can do it!



- G. If you are unable to set up an actual meeting with your legislator, do the next-best thing — meet with his or her staff members. Obviously, this "second-hand" type of contact is not as effective as an actual face-to-face meeting with your representative, and it often is difficult to solicit a commitment one way or the other. But Congressional staff *do* have an immense impact on the positions of the Members of Congress for whom they work. If this is the only kind of meeting which you can arrange, remember that a Congressperson's staff act as his/her eyes and ears — treat them with the same respect as you would the legislator, and try not to condescend to them as mere "underlings." These people can be extremely important in swaying positions, and the impressions you make on *them* are almost as important as that which you hope to make on the legislators themselves.
- H. Last, but surely not least, let GRNL know the outcome of your meetings(s). Keep us informed. Help us to know when we need to act. GRNL is working for *you*, but we need *your* help.

5 DEMONSTRATE A "COMPELLING NEED" FOR GAY/LESBIAN RIGHTS

There has been a real tendency on the part of Members of Congress — and probably most other elected officials as well — to try to avoid taking a position on controversial issues. This is particularly true if they cannot see a clear-cut and compelling need for such legislation.

If you are like many of us, you may be saying to yourself about now that "surely this can't apply to

our cause... After all these years of pickets and protests, surely they've got to realize there is a real need." Unfortunately, the combination of our "invisibility," the difficulty in documenting discrimination, and the fact that elected officials often relate only to cases from their own district or states (cases of which they may or may not even be aware), leaves us with a clear and critical task to be

accomplished — to *demonstrate a compelling need for the legislation.*

We believe that this particular problem goes far beyond merely convincing elected officials. The gay and lesbian communities themselves have clearly not shared the urgency of the movement for lesbian/gay civil rights legislation — legislation which can provide legal recourse to discrimination in employment, housing, etc., and which can substantially ease the constant fear of “discovery.”

To change this situation, there are several key steps we can take:

A. Document Discrimination:

GRNL's Research Division recently kicked off a campaign to systematically study discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations. We are also seeking information which could lend support to demonstrating patterns of discrimination and incidents of anti-gay oppression with regard to immigration and the military.

The Research Division now has a team devoting its exclusive attention to these areas. We are asking concerned individuals and organizations across the country to assist in this effort. Those who have been subjected to anti-gay discrimination, or know of others who have, are urged to write the discrimination Project, GRNL, Research Division, P.O. Box 1892, Washington, D.C. 20013.

If possible, people should send personal accounts of discriminatory treatment, written in narrative style. GRNL would, of course, honor the wishes of those who desire confidentiality. To supplement these case histories, GRNL is also looking for news articles, clippings, or other material from any source which may provide evidence of discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

B. Publicize Cases of Discrimination to Appeal to a Sense of Fairness:

We have a sense that one problem involved in Congressional non-perception of gay issues has been that when a good “clean” case of discrimination has been found, it has not been used to its fullest advantage, (though, perhaps we may be wrong as this relates to your particular area.) We believe that effectively publicizing such cases can significantly advance the potential level of support from Representatives/Senators. Cases which emphasize the unfairness of anti-gay discrimination and which demonstrate that gay civil rights is not a “fringe” or “bizarre” idea, but rather a “respectable” and “mainstream” issue dealing with *basic civil rights* normally enjoyed by all other Americans.

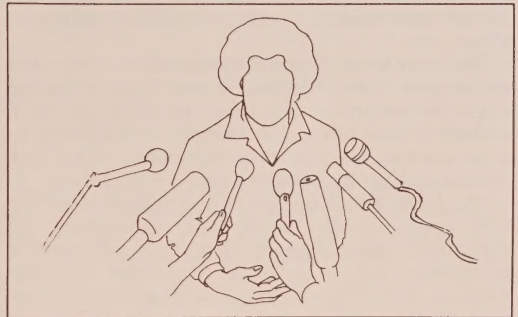
We have found that cases where the individual has been “discovered” to be gay rather than those cases where she/he has “come out” are probably most effective. The “come out” situation allows many people the opportunity to fall back on an irrational

dismissal of the discrimination involved by merely accusing the affected person of “flaunting,” while “discovered” cases more effectively appeal to a basic sense of fairness and justice.

Be careful, however, to find a “clean” case — one which cannot later be used against us to discredit the entire issue of gay civil rights.

Some good ways to “run” with a clean case are:

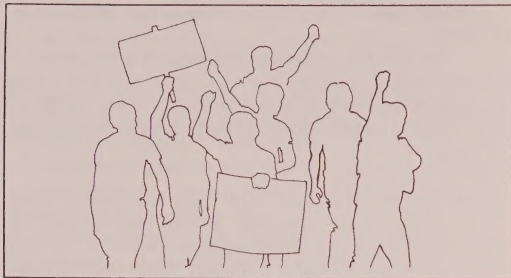
- Explain the case (and how the lesbian/gay civil rights legislation would have given the individual involved legal recourse) in letters to your Senators and/or Representatives, and for that matter, other elected officials as well.
- Send similar letters to respected community leaders who you hope to gain as supporters of the legislation.
- Set up pickets and/or protests at the site of such discrimination if recent enough or if you feel the discrimination was blatant enough to warrant such action (We cannot make a blanket statement that you should *always* picket or that you should *never* protest. The key should be: “Does it serve the goal of demonstrating the unfairness of discrimination *and* will it reinforce the message that gay civil rights is a respectable, mainstream issue.”)



- Call a Press Conference on the case (if timely). Often you will need a creative touch in order to attract the press or get them to follow through with a story. TV and radio talk shows are also useful.
- Finally, set up one-to-one meetings with your Senators/Representatives. You may wish to actually include the individual involved in your case, if he or she would be effective in that situation.

Although you may find yourself with a choice of several very good cases to use in your efforts, focus on one or two. Just as it was more effective to focus on a single known individual who lost his/her life in Vietnam rather than to cite difficult-to-comprehend statistics, citing a *single case*, if it is solid and defensible, is probably the most effective way to go.

6 PUBLIC PROTEST AT A MEMBER'S DISTRICT OFFICE IF (S)HE SUPPORTS ANTI-GAY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION



The Moral Majority and their cronies have proven that constituent pressure — even in the extreme — can have a major impact on public policy decisions. Although many elected officials will be the first to tell you privately how obnoxious they feel Moral Majority to be, many Members of Congress are also intimidated by them and dread the grief they get from that self-righteous crew if the Members choose

to support a pro-justice position on an anti-gay amendment.

We must make it perfectly clear that any such amendments which would deny gay and lesbian citizens access to various government programs and services are an *outrage!* Properly presented the general public will agree with our opposition. Members of Congress must be made aware that an anti-justice vote on such an amendment will result in at least as much grief and negative publicity as a pro-justice vote would generate from the other side. *But don't threaten action in advance!*

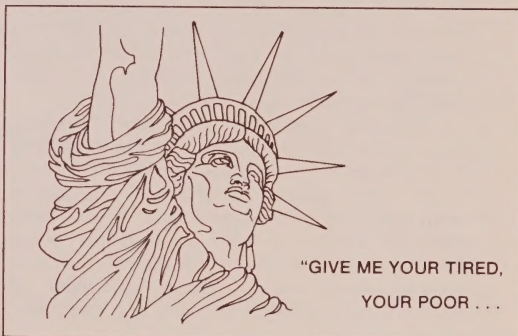
We recognize that for many, public protests, pickets, etc. go against the grain, and that not everyone is comfortable in participating in such events. But well-thought-out protests which show elected officials the negative consequences of their actions *and* which show the public the injustice of the position taken by the Senator/Representative can be very effective.

7 TAKE ACTION ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

In general, many of the previous steps of GRNL's Plan For Action will also apply to the immigration issue. A combination of constituent pressure, in various forms, and the establishment of broad-based support from both gay and non-gay public opinion leaders and organizations for this issue will be essential to ensure positive legislative action on this matter.

The issue lends itself well to a number of key areas of concern. There is, indeed, a clear and compelling need for reform in this area, as witnessed by a variety of cases in recent months. The issue is so clear-cut that it is hard for our opposition not to look "disrespectful" by opposing this simple reform.

We would stress one particular area of action on this issue: Contact your local newspaper (or electronic media, if appropriate) and urge them to editorialize on the subject. A number of major national dailies (including *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*) have done so already, but the *REAL* impact will come on the issue when local papers, such as the *Kalamazoo Herald* or the



Oregonian also do so. If your local papers have already taken an editorial position on the issue or do so after (or as a result of) your efforts, *send copies to GRNL immediately*. If you want copies of other editorials or background materials to help convince your local paper to take an editorial position, contact the Gay Rights National Lobby.

8 MAKE OUR OPPONENTS' POSITIONS LOOK "UNRESPECTABLE"

Work to ensure that our opponents' public image is an actual reflection of their positions (read that as negative). If our opponents are clearly understood to be the "bad guys" by Congressional representatives, take advantage of it. When these so-called "guardians of morality" fulminate against you, it makes you look better. Their strident, shrill and intemperate remarks can work against them. We must make sure that we don't fall into the same trap.

Constantly remind the public that these groups' ultimate goals are to impose their brand of morality on *everyone*, even if their attacks are currently

aimed at gays. There is overwhelming evidence which outlines their goals — the banning of books from schools and public libraries, support for anti-fornication laws regulating the private behavior of heterosexuals, etc. By using this information, we can show the general public that it is not merely benign altruism that should lead them to support our fight for justice. *They must be made to realize that they have a vested interest in defeating these self-righteous fanatics too!*

Another method of making our opponents appear as unrespectable as they actually are is through careful analysis of their local leaders' positions on

past issues such as civil rights for racial minorities, rights for women, or overt bigotry against Catholics or Jews, etc. We believe that careful examination will reveal that the same folks currently leading anti-gay crusades led similar fights against others in the past. Although you may strongly suspect this to be the case, *do not use it publicly unless you can document this suspicion as being true.* You may

also wish to contact GRNL to discuss the best ways to accomplish this documentation.

Don't hesitate to take these steps. Our opponents obviously would do these things — and more. Remember: *Their anti-justice positions are NOT respectable. Our stand on the side of justice for all people IS!*

9 UTILIZE ELECTIONS TO PRESS PRO-JUSTICE POSITIONS

"The groups that win their legislative fights are the ones that get involved in Congressional elections," says Brent Blackwelder, chairman of the League of Conservative Voters. "Participating actively in elections is important because it shows that you have clout."

Elections and your efforts during the preceding campaigns can have a tremendous impact on the support your Senator or Representative may give to the national lesbian/gay civil rights legislation.

This is particularly important because many legislators mistakenly believe that support for gay civil rights is politically damaging at election time.

There has been a vague feeling for a long time — not just in our community, but generally — that politics is "dirty business" and that it is "beneath our dignity" to participate in it. We can continue to follow this approach — but only at our own peril.

Participation in Congressional campaigns is a no-lose proposition. If your candidate wins, great — you've supported *and worked for* the winner. If he or she is not successful, the chances are that the winning candidate will recognize nevertheless the fact that you provided contributions and/or volunteer work. (S)he will *at least* see our side as one that is within the realm of serious political concerns — which, in many cases is a major advancement.

The number of persons you can muster for a given campaign will be limited. That very thought can make you feel unimportant, and could lead to no action at all. But even a small number of people can have a major impact — and the word will get around quickly that you are a "player" in the political game.

Although GRNL will shortly be releasing yet another Legislative Bulletin (number four) concerning methods for having an impact and building support of gay civil rights through participation in elections, the following are a few avenues which can be utilized in the meantime:

A. Voter Registration.

The "New Christian Right" received national attention for supposedly registering millions of new voters, supposedly all "born-again Christians." Whether or not they really did what they were credited with doing, it is true that one of the best ways to affect close elections is to register large numbers of previously unregistered voters.

Most information indicates that lesbians and gay men are already registered in large numbers, but any random survey of the gay community will probably reveal major room for

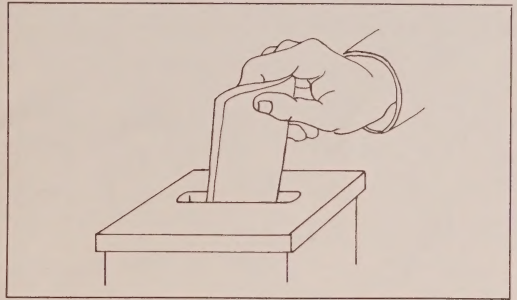
improvement.

In the future, we will be releasing yet another Legislative Bulletin dealing specifically with this subject. However, we would note one hint which can aid both on a national and a local level: When you do a voter registration drive, *make sure to obtain at least two copies of all names and addresses* before you submit the forms/cards to the voter registrar or county clerk — one for your organization's use (to make sure that these newly registered votes turn out on election day) and one to send to GRNL (so we can add their names to our Constituent Network.)

B. Candidate Questionnaires and Forums

These tools can be especially useful when it comes to "endorsing" one candidate over another. Questionnaires should be worded so that the questions relate to specific issues (such as immigration or employment security legislation). Generally worded questions may allow the candidate to say "yes, I support civil rights" while avoiding the issue of gay men and lesbians entirely. Questions, however, should not be demeaning or embarrassing to the candidate (such as the "when did you stop beating your wife?" variety). Try to avoid such "loaded" questions, but at the same time frame your questionnaires to elicit as much *specific* information as possible. For instance, a question such as "If elected, would you be willing to co-sponsor legislation such as the previously introduced Weiss-Waxman bill?" would be useful for soliciting the responses you may seek.

Candidate Forums, too, provide a personal glimpse into the thinking of a particular candidate you feel needs your support. Political clubs often sponsor such events for local elections, and it is surprising how many



candidates vie for the "choice" seats on the dias. Public exposure is the name of the game at election time, and *any way* that a candidate can achieve it is looked upon as beneficial to the candidate. Forums also allow for personal contact and spontaneous answers, where questionnaires can be "misplaced" or "padded" with well-thought-out answers designed to appeal to a particular interest group without making political commitments. Public forums, on the other hand, put the candidate "on the spot" and often answers to questions from the audience are more reflective of their true feelings and/or prejudices.

C. Volunteer Activities

It is very easy to "endorse" a candidate, but it is next to useless unless that endorsement is politically powerful or your organization is extremely strong. You will, in any case, need to back up your endorsement with campaign contributions and/or volunteers.

Virtually all candidates need volunteers

(except, perhaps, those who have been in office for generations).

Physically take your group of volunteers down to the campaign headquarters the first time out. If people you have asked to come just trickle in, the candidate or campaign manager might never know how much help you have actually provided. But if you can show up *en masse* with ten or twenty people, campaign officials will understand that our cause is *actively* working on their campaign.

To line up your volunteers, plan on calling five to six times as many people as you actually need. If your area is like most, less than half of those who say they will help actually show up.

There are a wide variety of volunteer chores: Door-to-door canvassing, telephoning, fold-and-stuff operations for mailing, etc. The campaign committee will plug you into the right spot.

D. Possible creation of a "Political Action Committee" (PAC)

E. Get Out the Vote

10 CONTINUE PRESSURE FOR GAY CIVIL RIGHTS REFORM AT THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL

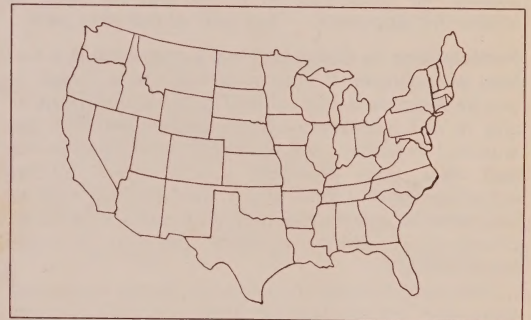
At first glance, it may seem difficult to understand how this may relate to the national legislation or the national legislative campaign. But it quickly becomes apparent that an aggressive local and/or state effort can assist the national campaign:

A. Your efforts for local or State legislation reinforce the fact that gay civil rights legislation affects constituents — and reinforces this fact to BOTH local and national office holders. Presently, it is far too easy for a Legislator to dismiss the issue as being one which impacts only those in big cities.

B. By vigorously and aggressively pressing our legislative agenda at all levels throughout the nation, we force our opponents into "spreading themselves thin" — making their task far more difficult. If they can concentrate their anti-gay efforts in one or two locations where we have our "best chances" for success, they can be far more effective in curbing our efforts. We must force them to spread themselves thin by fighting us everywhere.

We therefore believe that local and state legislation should be pressed — even in hardcore conservative areas. In the context of the fact that no controversial social justice legislation has ever been passed quickly — even in the best of political climates — there is simply no reason to delay for some "better time." There must be a "wear 'em down" phase before the legislation can ever pass. It is best to begin that now — so that when the time comes we will be prepared to act.

There are those in the gay community who think

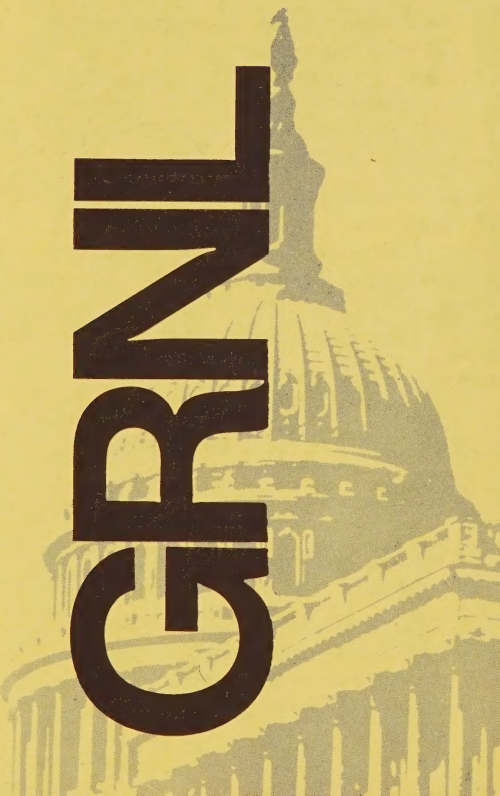


our beliefs are mistaken — that it is best to "let sleeping dogs lie." They feel that if we just "remain quiet" maybe these insidious "morality" forces won't push their anti-gay agenda. This ignores the fact, however, that we *currently* have a situation in most parts of this country where lesbians and gay men can be fired from their jobs or evicted from their homes *simply for being gay!* And it also ignores the fact that at its base the mentality of these so-called "guardians of morality" is that of bullies. As an article in *Christopher Street* recently pointed out, bullies aren't appeased but encouraged by a victim's reluctance to defend him-or herself.

So, while we acknowledge that there are exceptions, and agree that strategy must be carefully thought through, we also believe that an aggressive justice-oriented posture serves all of us, no matter at what level of government this may take place. In the long run, the struggle we *each* face individually is the same struggle we *all* must face together.

**THE
GAY RIGHTS
NATIONAL
LOBBY
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**FOR
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A professional lobby with a critical job to do.

The Gay Rights National Lobby is the only full time national group lobbying Congress for civil rights for lesbians and gay men. In addition to the positive goal of federal gay civil rights legislation, GRNL also works to defeat anti-gay bills and amendments as they arise.

The creation of anti-gay lobbies such as "Christian Voice" and the "Moral Majority," which are determined to turn back the clock on our progress toward justice, makes it likely we will face more anti-gay measures.

GRNL works closely with other national organizations and with local groups to develop critical grass-roots support for gay civil rights legislation.

What does the Gay Rights National Lobby do?

- *We engage in direct legislative advocacy*

GRNL develops legislation, secures sponsorship and provides information to Members of Congress and their staffs.

- ***We are building a strong grass-roots Constituent Network***

GRNL works with local organizations and through its Field Associate system to build a strong constituent network capable of generating thousands of letters to Congress.

- ***We prepare informative lobbying literature***

GRNL prepares persuasive lobbying booklets which assist in the process of educating Members of Congress and their staffs on the issue of civil rights for lesbians and gay men.

- ***We serve as a "watch-dog" on negative amendments***

GRNL fights anti-gay bills and amendments such as the "McDonald Resolution" and the "Family Protection Act," which would severely damage the cause of basic justice.

- ***We release research results***

GRNL releases research results on subjects such as the electoral impact of supporting gay civil rights.

- ***We build coalitions with other public interest lobbies***

GRNL works to gain and increase the active support of progressive and public interest groups and their constituencies.

- ***We keep members informed on our progress through regular communications***

GRNL maintains communications through its newsletter, CAPITOL HILL, and through the Executive Director's Report, Legislative Bulletins and Congressional Action Alerts as they are needed.

You can help us create a better future.

By joining or contributing to the Gay Rights National Lobby you will help provide critical financial resources for a professional lobbying effort aimed at securing gay civil rights.

With your help, GRNL can continue the progress toward national legislation to prohibit unjust discrimination.

Without your help, lesbians and gay men will continue to face the prospects of losing their jobs or housing if someone "discovers" that they are gay.

We all have a stake in ending arbitrary discrimination and in ensuring the right to privacy. The Gay Rights National Lobby welcomes everyone — women and men, gay people and heterosexuals, activists and those who are less able to be active.

What community leaders are saying about GRNL

"The struggle for federal lesbian/gay civil rights legislation will be a long and difficult one. But I'm sure the Gay Rights National Lobby, with the support of lesbians, gay men, and non-gay supporters from across the nation, will effectively and professionally lobby on behalf of the issue."

JEAN O'LEARY

Former Co-Executive Director,
National Gay Task Force

"I am deeply concerned that anti-gay forces such as "Christian Voice," misusing religion to justify discrimination, will erode our progress and deny us our rights. The Gay Rights National Lobby is working for us to defeat anti-gay bills and amendments at Congress. They have my enthusiastic support."

REV. TROY PERRY

Founder and Moderator of the
Universal Fellowship of
Metropolitan Community Churches



What people are saying about

Gay Rights National Lobby

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The Advocate

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Washington Post

(Referring to GRNL Exec.
Director Steve Endean)

"A professional, first-class institution to lobby for the rights of homosexual Americans . . . in the middle of a conservative decade, the need for an effective gay rights lobby will be acute."

The Washington Blade

G. R. N. L.
P. O. Box 1892
Washington, D. C. 20013

The Gay Rights National Lobby
930 F Street, N.W. Suite 611
Washington, D.C. 20004

THE GAY RIGHTS NATIONAL LOBBY

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOR
GAYS



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~~Washington, D.C. 20004~~

Gay Rights National Lobby

1606 17th Street, N.W.

• Washington, D.C. 20009 •

(202) 462-4255

Dear Friend,

This information packet marks the beginning of what we hope will be a long and mutually beneficial relationship between your organization and the Gay Rights National Lobby.

As you may know, the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) was formed over three years ago with the support and encouragement of organizations such as the National Gay Task Force (NGTF), the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, and others. GRNL is the only full-time lobby at Congress for lesbian and gay civil rights legislation.

After early difficulties, the Gay Rights National Lobby is now working vigorously to secure passage of the basic civil rights legislation for this nation's lesbians and gay men. In addition to this primary goal, GRNL lobbies on other matters of concern to the gay community. A major focus is to defeat anti-gay bills and amendments as they arise.

The first year of GRNL's "New Beginning" has seen many accomplishments:

- o We now have a record number of co-sponsors for the Weiss-Waxman gay civil rights bill in the House of Representatives. The 54 co-sponsors came as a result of effective lobbying here in Washington and strong constituent pressure at home.
- o We helped initiate introduction of the first Senate lesbian/gay civil rights bill in history. Senator Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) has introduced S. 2081 with the co-sponsorship of Senators Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-New York).
- o We have monitored the efforts of anti-gay groups such as "Christian Voice" and the "Moral Majority" and have kept the community informed. We have reported the introduction of anti-gay bills in both Houses of Congress, H.C.R. 166 (the McDonald Resolution) in the House and S. 1808 (the "Family Protection Act") in the Senate.

The federal government has been and will continue to be a major arena for action for groups favoring social change. It is no accident that some of the most far reaching victories of the Black and Women's movements were won at the federal level. Moreover, we strongly believe that what occurs at the federal level most certainly will have a major impact on the struggle for justice for lesbians and gay men at the state and local levels.

(next page, please)



Legislative Bulletin

From The Gay Rights National Lobby

Some Helpful Hints for Writing to Congress:

- **KEEP YOUR LETTER BRIEF**—a page or two is probably an ideal length.
- **HANDWRITTEN LETTERS ARE PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE**—so long as they are **legible**! You do not **have** to type your letter.
- **GO DIRECTLY TO YOUR POINT**—Let the Senator or Congressperson know what you would like him or her to do. Explain why. Relate the issue to **your** congressional district or state. **When** you talk about that legislator's constituents, you have his or her undivided attention!
- **ASK FOR THEIR POSITION**—Be sure to ask the legislator to tell you his/ her position on the issue: "Will you co-sponsor this legislation?" "Will you support this bill?" "Will you oppose the amendment?"
- **DEMONSTRATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS/HER PAST ACTIONS**—For instance: "I know and appreciate the fact that you opposed the anti-gay amendment to Legal Services. I believe that support for (co-sponsorship of) the civil rights bill would be a consistent extension of that stand for non-discrimination."
- **AVOID ASSOCIATING YOURSELF WITH A GROUP**—Generally it is best to avoid mentioning your membership in, or association with, a citizen lobby. Legislators care more about your **individual** views.
- **USE YOUR OWN WORDS**—The Gay Rights National Lobby has already used, and will probably again use, pre-printed postcard campaigns at critical times. We do so partially because our community and those who share our commitment to social justice have shown no particular willingness to generate massive personal letter campaigns, YET. But, admittedly, pre-printed postcards and form letters do not have the same impact as a well-worded personal letter. Even when the lobby puts out pre-printed materials in the future, it has far more impact if you take the essential message and put it in your own words.
- **HOW TO WRITE**—Below are the addresses to write:

Senator (your Senator's name)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congressperson (your Representative's name)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
- **FOLLOW UP ANY ANSWER**—When the legislator writes back, follow up with a letter to again drive home your point, if she/ he gave a vague or unclear response or no response to your question, use the second letter to firmly, but *politely*, ask again.
- **WHOM TO WRITE**—You should not hesitate to write your legislators—even if you think they are hostile to your views. GRNL may also, from time to time, ask you to write members of the key committees and subcommittees. It is a good idea, in these cases, to send a copy of your letter to *your own* Senators or Congresspersons.
- **ADDRESS ONLY ONE ISSUE**—By focusing on only one issue in each letter, you can help guarantee that the letter is seen by the right staff member.

Post Office Box 1892, Washington, D.C. 20013

BULLETIN NUMBER ONE
FILE FOR
FURTHER
REFERENCE

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- **DON'T APOLOGIZE FOR WRITING**—Too often we feel like we're taking time in the legislator's busy day, but we need to remember that he/she has a responsibility to consider *your* letters.
 - **NEVER TRY TO IMPRESS THE LEGISLATOR WITH HOW IMPORTANT YOU ARE**—A better way to demonstrate your influence is by gaining new participants to GRNL's Constituent Network.
 - **TRY NOT TO EXAGGERATE YOUR CASE**—As office-holders, your legislators no doubt have a good deal of experience with exaggeration and won't be impressed.
 - **DON'T HESITATE TO TAKE A STRONG POSITION**—but **don't show your anger!** While this is important as a *general* rule, it is even more important on the gay issue. Faced with serious discrimination and outrageous assaults on human dignity, many lesbians and gay men — and those who care about them — have a great deal of anger. It is **not** productive to heap that anger on elected officials. While it may sometimes feel good to get your anger out, we cannot stress enough that this is counterproductive. If you feel that your particular case is an exception, please check with the Gay Rights National Lobby first before spewing your anger out on elected officials.
 - **TRY TO SPEAK FROM A SHARED PERSPECTIVE**—Even with politicians from starkly different political philosophies from your own, you can usually find some area of shared perspective. If you do not feel that you have adequate information on him/her, contact us.
 - **DON'T THREATEN TO OPPOSE A LEGISLATOR** at an election although it is sometimes tempting. Such threats are deeply resented and usually unnecessary. Legislators are not dumb, and the most effective "threat" is the unspoken one.
 - **BE CREATIVE—THINK OF NEW REASONS TO WRITE.** Using supportive data, newspaper clippings, polls, etc., can be a springboard for communicating with your legislator. One of the fairest criticisms of any movement effort is that movements are usually humorless—it is a good idea then, to try to put a little humor into your letters, though, obviously, **not** at the legislator's expense.
 - **NEVER, EVER SEND A CARBON COPY**—Some people will write a letter to one Senator and send a carbon copy or a Xerox to the other. This is a serious error. It tells the legislator who receives the copy that he or she is not as *important* as the legislator who received the original letter, and, in essence, is a blow to that legislator's ego. Politicians—believe it or not—are human beings, too, and they respect those who treat them that way. While you should never send a carbon copy or a Xerox to a legislator, if possible you *should* send a copy of all your letters to GRNL, as well as copies of any response you may receive.
 - **MAKE YOUR LETTERS PERSONAL**—Politicians want their constituents to know them as individuals—and this usually means on a 'first name' basis. If you have met them at some point, contributed to them, or in some other fashion had contact with them, remind them of the occasion and make your letter personal. This will help on any issue, but it is particularly helpful on an issue like gay civil rights.
 - **GIVE PRAISE WHEN IT IS DUE**—Most of us don't like to hear from people who only criticize our actions or demand favors. Neither do politicians. When a legislator does something you like — whether it be on this issue or any other issue — take a moment to thank him/her for it. It will pay off in the long run.
 - **TRY TO AVOID THE TERM "GAY RIGHTS."**—The term doesn't effectively communicate the issues of basic civil rights and fairness. Opponents have helped to make the phrase mean something foreign or bizarre and it has gotten mixed up with "approval of homosexuality." While that goal may be personally appealing to you, it is not relevant to the issue of civil rights legislation. Indeed we have pointed out time and again to legislators that civil rights laws are not designed to be a "Good Housekeeping" seal of approval. Instead of the term "gay rights," we suggest such phrases as "civil rights for lesbians and gay men," "gay or lesbian civil rights," "fair employment for gay people," etc. Stress the fact that the proposed gay civil rights legislation is consistent with the long and proud tradition of civil rights for racial minorities, religious tolerance, etc.